

**POS 401F:
Public Opinion and Political Behavior
University of Nevada, Las Vegas
Spring, 2009. Dr. Jelen**

Contact Information:

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Office Hours:

MW 10:-11:00 am
W 2-4 pm
and by appointment

Required Texts:

Robert S. Erikson and Kent Tedin, *American Public Opinion: Its Origins, Content, and Impact* (updated 7th edition).

Barbara A. Bardes and Robert W. Oldendick, *Public Opinion: Measuring the American Mind* (3rd edition).

Herbert Asher, *Polling and the Public: What Every Citizen Should Know* (7th edition).

Objective:

This course is intended to provide the advanced undergraduate with a sophisticated understanding of public opinion in American politics. Issues of opinion measurement, the content of public opinion, and the role of public opinion in democratic politics will be considered. Attention will be paid to individual and systematic limits of public opinion in the United States.

Grading:

There will be an essay midterm exam, given on Wednesday, February 25. There will be a final exam, given on Monday, Wednesday, May 6, at 10:10 am. Each exam counts for 30% of student's final grade.

In addition on or before April 27, each student will submit an annotated bibliography, consisting of 100 word abstracts on 20-30 *scholarly* publications on a topic to be chosen in consultation with the instructor.. The topic should be chosen and accepted by the instructor on or before February 18. The annotated bibliography will count for 30% of student's final grade.

In addition, there will be several out of class assignments throughout the semester. Collectively, these assignments will count for 10% of student's final grade.

Policies:

Any attempt at academic dishonesty results in failure of the entire course. This includes, but is not limited to, receiving outside assistance on exams, or using unattributed material from other sources.

Exceptions to the final exam schedule will only be granted in cases of **documented** medical or bereavement considerations. Make-ups for the midterm will be administered on April 29, during the scheduled class period.

Grade appeals will be submitted in writing no less than 48 hours after the return of a graded assignment. Responses to such appeals will also be written.

The Disability Resource Center (DRC) coordinates all academic accommodations for students with documented disabilities. The DRC is the official office to review and house disability documentation for students, and to provide them with an official Academic Accommodation Plan to present to the faculty if an accommodation is warranted. The DRC strongly encourages faculty to provide accommodations only if and when they are in receipt of said plan. Faculty should not provide students accommodations without being in receipt of this plan.

UNLV complies with the provisions set forth in Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, offering reasonable accommodations to qualified students with documented disabilities. If you have a documented disability that may require accommodations, you will need to contact the DRC for the coordination of services. The DRC is located in the Student Services

Complex (SSC), Room 137, and the contact numbers are: VOICE (702) 895-0866, TTY (702) 895-0652, FAX (702) 895-0651. For additional information, please visit: <<http://studentlife.unlv.edu/disability/>>.

A Useful Website: For a variety of services to assist students in their academic endeavors, log on to http://tlc.unlv.edu/student_success.htm

Order of Events, with Approximate Dates:

- I. Introduction: Public Opinion and Democracy I (January 12-21)
Erikson and Tedin, 1, Bardes and Oldendick, 1, Asher, 1.
- II. The Evidence: Surveys and Polls (January 26-28)
Asher, 2-5, 8; Erikson and Tedin, 2; Bardes and Oldendick, 2-4
- III. Sources of Public Opinion (February 2-11)
Erikson and Tedin, 5, 7; Bardes and Oldendick, 5
- IV. The Effects of the News Media (February 18-23)
Erikson and Tedin, 7; Asher, 6.

Wednesday, February 25: Midterm Exam

- V. General Political Orientations (March 2-18)
Erikson and Redin, 3; Bardes and Oldendick, 6; Asher, 2
- VI. Issue Attitudes (March 23-April 1)
Bardes and Oldendick, 7-10
- VII. Relinquishment and Political Change (April 13-22)
Erikson and Tedin, 4
- VIII. Public Opinion and Democracy II (April 27)
Erikson and Tedin 10-11; Bardes and Oldendick, 12, Asher, 7, 9

Wednesday, April 25: Make-up Midterm exam

Wednesday, May 6, 10:10 am: Final Exam